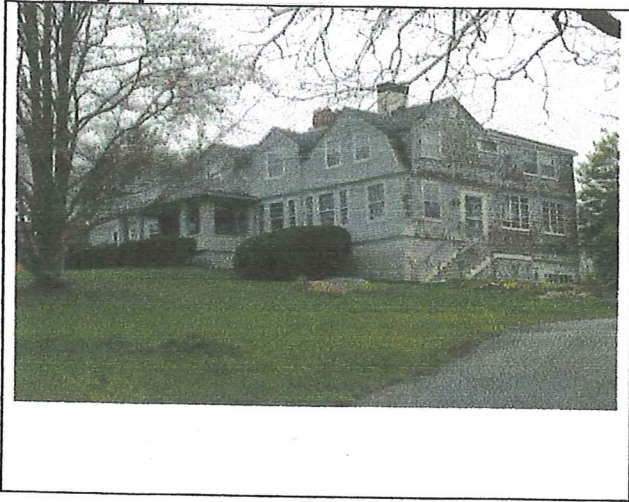


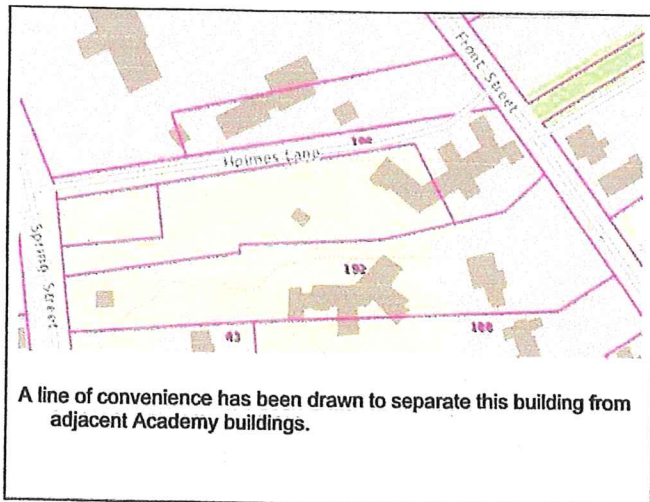
FORM B – BUILDING BOSTON,
MASSACHUSETTS 02125

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map



A line of convenience has been drawn to separate this building from adjacent Academy buildings.

Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (month / year): June 2019

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

014 026

MARION

N

MRN.211

Town/City: Marion

Place: (neighborhood or village): Wharf Village

Address: 192 Front Street

Historic Name: Rev. Percy Browne – Sidney
Hosmer House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: single-family seasonal residential

Date of Construction: 1881-1882

Source: Ochsner, O'Gorman and Wright

Style/Form: Shingle/ gable block complex

Architect/Builder: Henry Hobson Richardson

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/ wood

Roof: wood and asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: detached
garage and shed

Major Alterations (with dates): Siding, porch enclosure
and expansion, second gambrel (right), left wing and rear ell
additions: 1903-1921.

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.05 acres

Setting: Part of the Wharf Village neighborhood, the 18th – 19th century residential core of Marion populated by small- and moderately scaled wood frame cottages and institutional buildings. The subject house is currently part of the adjoining Tabor Academy campus, a mix of early to-late 20th century educational buildings, landscapes and athletic fields.

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Browne – Hosmer House, constructed 1881-1882, is an exceptionally well-documented and well-preserved example of a domestic design by the architect H.H. Richardson. The house was enlarged and altered between 1903 and 1921 according to Wright, who speculates that Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, the successor firm to Richardson, were consulted, but cites no evidence for the attribution.¹ The original appearance, however, compared to the early 20th-century additions, both reproduced below, suggests the alterations were carefully designed to harmonize with the original building fabric, plan, and silhouette, and have acquired a degree of significance in their own right.

The style of the house, termed "Shingle" by Vincent Scully, Jr., during the mid-1950s, is characterized by simplified volumes clad in a generally uninterrupted skin of oiled or stained shingles, although many examples include classically derived articulation. During the period of the style's popularity between the 1880s and 1910s, its disseminators, including Richardson, McKim, Mead and White, Peabody and Stearns, and William Ralph Emmerson, among others, termed it the "Modern Colonial." Scully appropriately re-interpreted its characteristics in order to distinguish it from the related Colonial Revival style. Shingle houses are thought to have been inspired by the observation of 18th century examples throughout southern New England by this group of architects, who endeavored to re-interpret the picturesque gambrel and "salt box" or lean-to forms combined with rusticated wood surfaces, which they greatly admired.²

Considered among the smallest and least expensive of H H Richardson's domestic designs, the story-and-a-half Browne – Hosmer House is a long, low gable-block with a knee-wall upper story enclosing a main body approximately 64 feet wide and 22 feet deep. In its current manifestation, after a number of alterations dating to the early 20th century, the house retains a high degree of integrity and survives as a legible example of Richardson's design sensibilities. The strongly horizontal façade is enlivened by a generally symmetrical arrangement of four large wall dormers placed in a regular pattern. Two narrower gabled dormers in the center are flanked by larger gambrels at either end. The outer edges of the gambrels are full, while the inner edges disappear into the plane of the façade at the lower, steeper sections of their slopes. A full-gambrel wing extends to the left of the main body, and a smaller, hipped wing is located at the opposite end. The nine-bay façade is interrupted, somewhat off-center in the 5th and 6th bays and in alignment with the left gabled dormer, by the main entry and two-bay-wide entry porch, which projects 9 feet forward of the façade. A large 40-foot-wide by 17-foot-deep rear ell now expands the right half of the house. The plan of the roof reproduced below reveals it to have a complex structure of double gables bridged by a low-pitched shed and a hip extension to the right (facing front) that ties back to the original main gable with a shed bridge (see figure 4).

The house largely retains its original finishes, consisting of a uniform skin of weathered shingles woven at the corners and porch openings. The porch is supported by paired solid shingled pillars and parapet. The pillars expand slightly toward the top to form arches within the voids between. Abundant sash and casement windows in a variety of patterns light the building. The public right half of the house is lit by a regular pattern of tripart windows in the main body and a single, standard window in the right wing. On the opposite side smaller, higher windows flank a single large casement. The dormer windows are all standard sized; the gabled dormers lit with single lights and the broader gambrels with pairs. The standard double-hung sash are all eight-over-eight, while the larger public-space windows are twelve-over-twelve with narrower twelve-over-twelve flankers. The inner wall of the recessed porch are lit by three closely spaced standard sash. Most or all of the original sash appears to survive. Brick chimneys centered on the rear and right elevations vented multiple open hearths

The house is sited at a deep setback facing east toward Front Street and Sippican Harbor on a gentle rise on a deep, narrow lot that runs through the block to Spring Street. The grounds appear to be kept generally in open lawn with mature

¹ Mark Wright, "H.H. Richardson's House for Reverend Brown, Rediscovered," *JSAH*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (March, 2009) pp. 74-99

² See: Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style* (Yale University Press, revised edition, 1971) pp. 71-112.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

foundation plantings and specimen trees. The frontage is protected from the street by a stone and dressed granite retaining wall and tall hedgerow. An asphalt drive that interrupts the hedgerow runs along the left (north) side of the property beyond the house. The formerly private property, which originally included a second lot of 1.25 acres to the north, is currently part of the campus of Tabor Academy. A 1987 plan of the property is reproduced below, figure 5.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Browne – Hosmer House was constructed for the Rev. William Percy Browne (1838-1901). Born in Dublin, Ireland, he was a son of Dr. Daniel Henderson Browne and Margaret (Corbet) Browne. His mother immigrated as a widow to the U.S. in 1849. Browne was educated at Kenyon College in Ohio, where he was a classmate of John Cotton Brooks, a younger brother of Phillips Brooks, later rector of Trinity Church in Boston beginning in 1879. Browne was trained for the ministry at the Philadelphia Divinity School. In 1866 he was ordained in the Episcopal Church, named rector of St. Philips' Church in Philadelphia, and married Katherine Wetherill, a daughter of Christopher Wetherill. According to Wright, during Browne's time in Philadelphia he was mentored by Phillips Brooks. In 1872 he was named rector of St. James' Church, Roxbury, where he served for the remainder of his life.

In 1879 Browne and his family spent part of the summer with John Cotton Brooks in Marion. Both Browne and Brooks were also members of Boston's St. Botolph Club, as was the architect Henry Hobson Richardson. Both Phillips Brooks' engagement of Richardson to design a new church for Trinity in 1874 and the trio's social connections likely brought the client and his architect together. Wright relates a possibly apocryphal account of a wager between Browne and Richardson that the architect could not design a house for under \$2,500.³

Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) is considered to have been the most accomplished and forward-looking American architect of the 19th century and his life is therefore exceptionally well-documented. He was a native of Louisiana, attended Harvard (1856-1859), and was among the first generation of architects to attend the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1860-1865). Between 1865 and 1874 he resided in New York but after accepting the commission to design Trinity Church in 1874 he settled permanently in Brookline. According to Ochsner, as a mature architect

Richardson began to simplify form and to eliminate archeological detail. He turned instead to basic shapes, continuous surfaces, and the innate qualities of brick, stone, and shingles to create the distinctive architectural quality of his buildings. By 1882 Richardson was recognized as the leading architect in America; even in Europe he had few rivals. In the last years of his career he was besieged with commissions.⁴

In his recent biography O'Gorman expands on Richardson's influence and impact:

Richardson attained the status of premier architect in his own day and has retained that reputation in ours. A member of that generation of giants who brought American culture to maturity during the 1870s, a generation that included architects, writers, and artists such as Mark Twain and Winslow Homer, he established a kind of apostolic architectural succession that embraced Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Like theirs, his work stood out in both character and quality from that of his contemporaries. He was the first of the trio to define American architecture as distinct from its European origins, as rooted in the cities and landscape of North America, and his work, like that of his successors, continues to attract acclamation throughout the world.⁵

Wright's 2009 *JSAH* article describes the original finishes and plan of the house in great detail. The plan, reproduced below, reveals that the building was not strictly rectangular but more complex, with shallower wings at either end; however the silhouette, when viewed from Front Street, appeared as a simpler rectangle enclosed by a single large, low-pitched gable. The main rectangle was expanded on both sides by single-story elements; on the right by a short hip-roofed wing and on the left by a

³ Much of this information comes from Wright and Rosbe, *passim*.

⁴ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *H.H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* (MIT Press, 1982) p. 3.

⁵ James F. O'Gorman, *Living Architecture, A Biography of H.H. Richardson* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) p. 10.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

low, gable-roofed woodshed. A rear porch sheltered by a shed expanded the rear-left corner of the building as it wrapped around the corner. The façade was enlivened by asymmetrical wall dormers. The left end of the façade terminated in a broad cross gambrel, and two other gabled wall dormers were arranged in a regular pattern across the rest of the elevation. Among the most distinctive original features of the house, which was most-characteristic of Richardson's work, was the broad, recessed entrance porch centered on the façade. This striking void in the plane of the façade can be observed in other of Richardson's designs, specifically in the Stoughton House in Cambridge (CAM.21, 90 Brattle Street, 1882-1883). This dark, cave-like space, along with the gambrel, could be considered the building's most innovative features, conveying a strong picturesque sensibility.

The building's original finishes included an uninterrupted shingle skin. The shingles were not stopped at either the corners or at the edge of the recessed porch but were woven around the edges. Shingles in varied patterns were arranged in strong horizontal strips across the façade and other elevations. The battered wood base of the building was sheathed in plain shingles arranged in orderly rows. Between a skirted water table and the second-floor level was a band of stepped shingles that conveyed a strong sense of rusticity and age. The upper story, above a second-floor-level skirted band course, was sheathed again in plain shingles, however the rows at the sills and lintels of the windows were picked out in single rows of saw-tooth shingles. The row at the lintels in the gabled dormers aligned precisely with the eave lines, a subtle detail that united the elevation visually.

In his design for the subject property Wright credits Richardson with re-introducing the gambrel, a popular embellishment of 18th century urban Georgian buildings that during the late-19th century became a character-defining feature of the Colonial Revival and Shingle style movements. Although a group of Richardson's contemporaries, including McKim, Mead and White, Peabody and Stearns, and William Ralph Emmerson developed their own distinctive vocabularies with regard to Shingle design through the use of gambrel volumes, Richardson may have been the first to introduce it in his design for this building.

In his interpretation of the subject building Scully quotes Richardson's biographer Mariana Van Rensselaer extensively, who captures the character of the building particularly well:

Its foundations follow with delightful frankness the variations of the ground upon which it stands, while its good proportions and the harmonious arrangement of its roof-lines gives it that truly architectural character in which dignity may lie for even the most modest building. It is so appropriate to its surroundings that it seems to have grown out of them by some process of nature, and it is equally appropriate to its purpose. It explains itself at once as a gentleman's summer home, but with a simplicity which does not put the humble village neighbor out of countenance...The longer one studies this little house the more one likes it, the more typical it seems of that sort of excellence which the American owner so often craves – artistic treatment combined with cheapness, comfort with small dimensions, beauty with simplicity, refinement without decoration.⁶

After Browne's death the property came under the ownership, according to Wright, of Sidney Hosmer, a Boston electrical engineer. It is likely that Hosmer undertook the renovations and additions that have brought the house to its current appearance. Hosmer (1869-1951) was a son of prominent Boston physician George Washington Hosmer. Sydney Hosmer was a vice president and general manager of the Edison Company of Boston. Throughout his active career he wintered at 74 Bay State Road in a household that included his wife Clara Maria (Barnes, 1869-1937), four children born between 1897 and 1904, and four servants. By 1940, by that time retired, Hosmer was enumerated as living in Marion at the subject house with his second wife, Marguerite, adult son Sydney Barnes Hosmer, and a stepson.⁷

A partial chain of title establishes that Hosmer sold the property to Evelyn Gardner in 1944; her estate sold the property to Everett A and Hannah D TenBrook of Kansas City in 1959. In 1966, the adults in this household included Everett (b. 1907), a lawyer, Hannah (b. 1910), a housewife, John TenBrook (b. 1939), likely their son, US Naval Reserve/student, and Frances D (b. 1941), likely his wife, housewife. Everett died in 1993 and John Tenbrook conveyed the property to Tabor Academy in 2008.⁸

⁶ Scully, p. 95.

⁷ Ancestry: 1900, 1910, 1940 Federal Census; *Boston Daily Globe*, Feb. 21, 1935, p. 12 (an account of Hosmer's delivery of an address at the Edison Gold Button Club identifies him as vice president and general manager).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

- 1855 H.F. Walling, *Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*
1879 Geo H Walker & Co, *Atlas of Plymouth County Massachusetts*.
1903 L. J. Richards & Co, *New Topographic Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County ... Massachusetts*
1908, 1921, 1933 Sanborn Insurance Atlases.

Edward W. Gordon, Wharf Village MHC Area Form, MRN.N, 1998.

Margaret Henderson Floyd, *Architecture After Richardson* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *H.H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* (MIT Press, 1982).

James F. O'Gorman, *Living Architecture, A Biography of H.H. Richardson* (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds (PCRD) [book]:[page], (date).

Judith Westlund Rosbe, *Marion in the Golden Age* (History Press, 2009) pp. 65-69.

Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style* (Yale University Press, revised edition, 1971).

Mark Wright, "H.H. Richardson's House for Reverend Brown, Rediscovered," *JSAH*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (March, 2009) pp. 74-99.

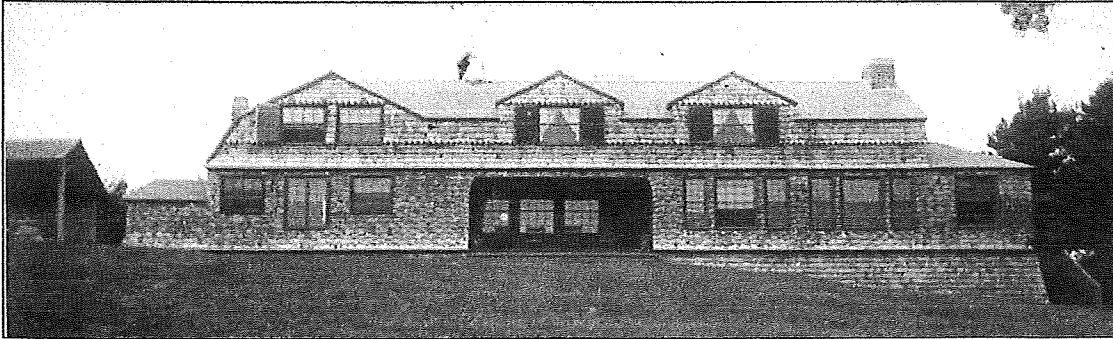
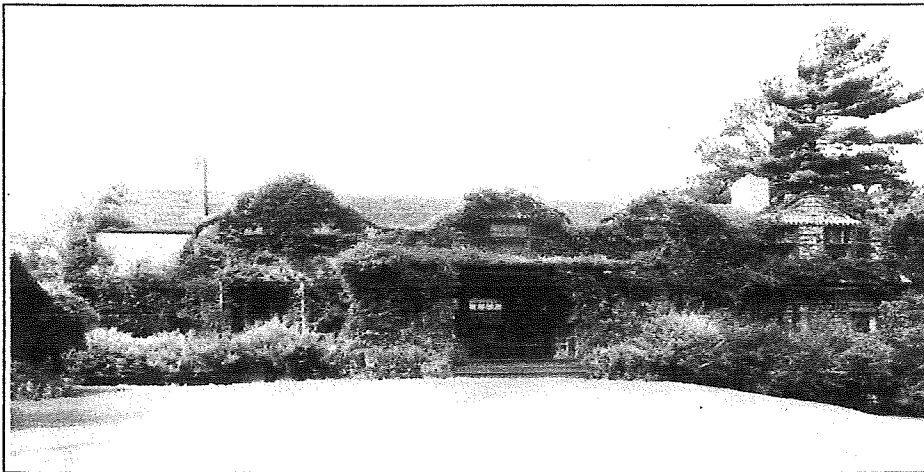


Figure 1. Wright, p. 86 showing main façade as originally constructed.



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Figure 2. Wright, p. 90: 1934 photograph by Bernice Abbott showing early 20th century additions, including the second gambrel wall dormer (right), front porch (center), and full-height gambrel wing (left).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

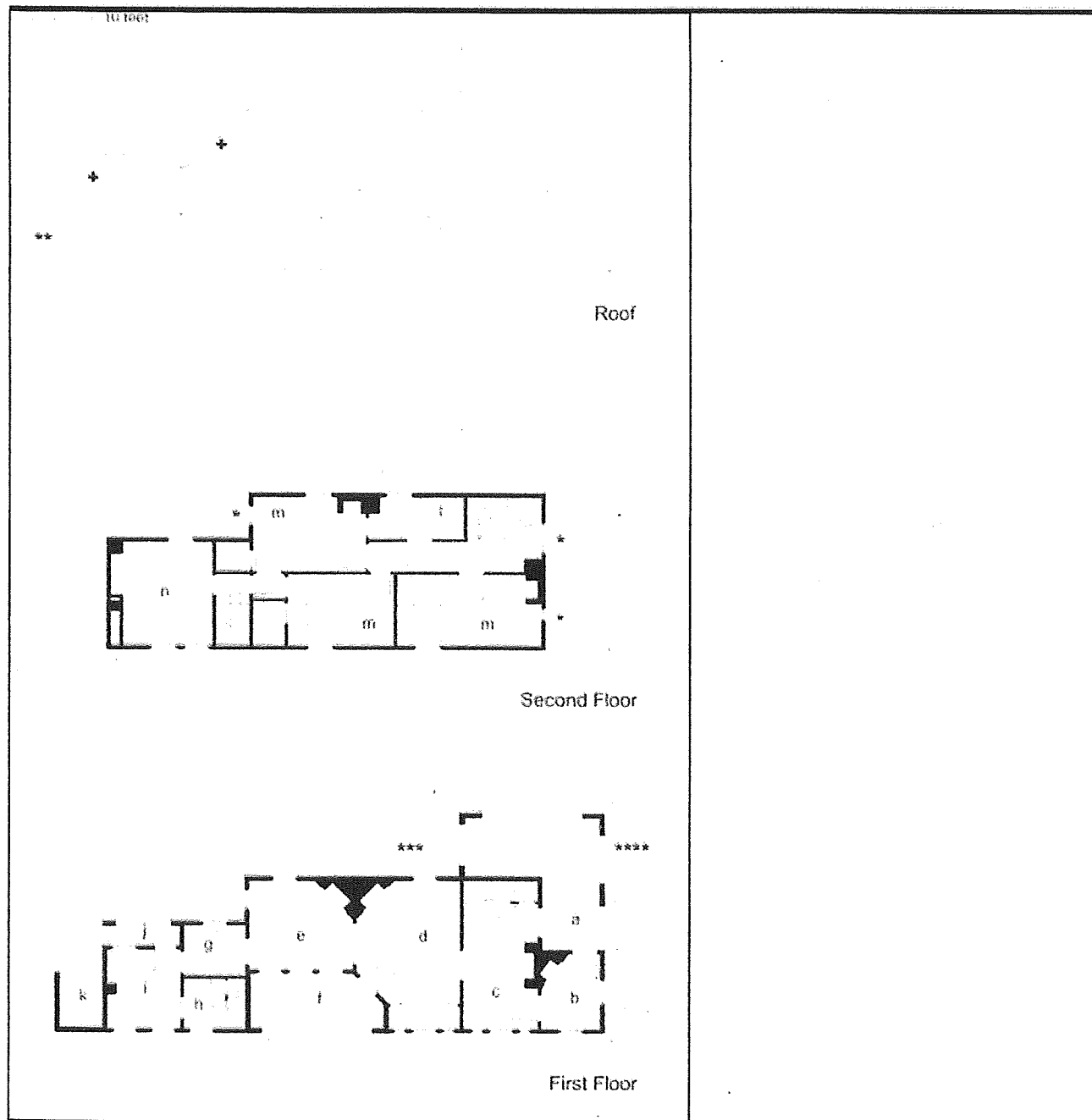


Figure 3. Wright, p. 85, original plan. Legend: a. porch, b. study, c. hall, d. parlor, e. dining, f. loggia, g. pantry, h. back stair, i. kitchen, j. porch, k. woodshed, l. bath, m. bedrooms, n. servant's room.

Continuation sheet 8

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

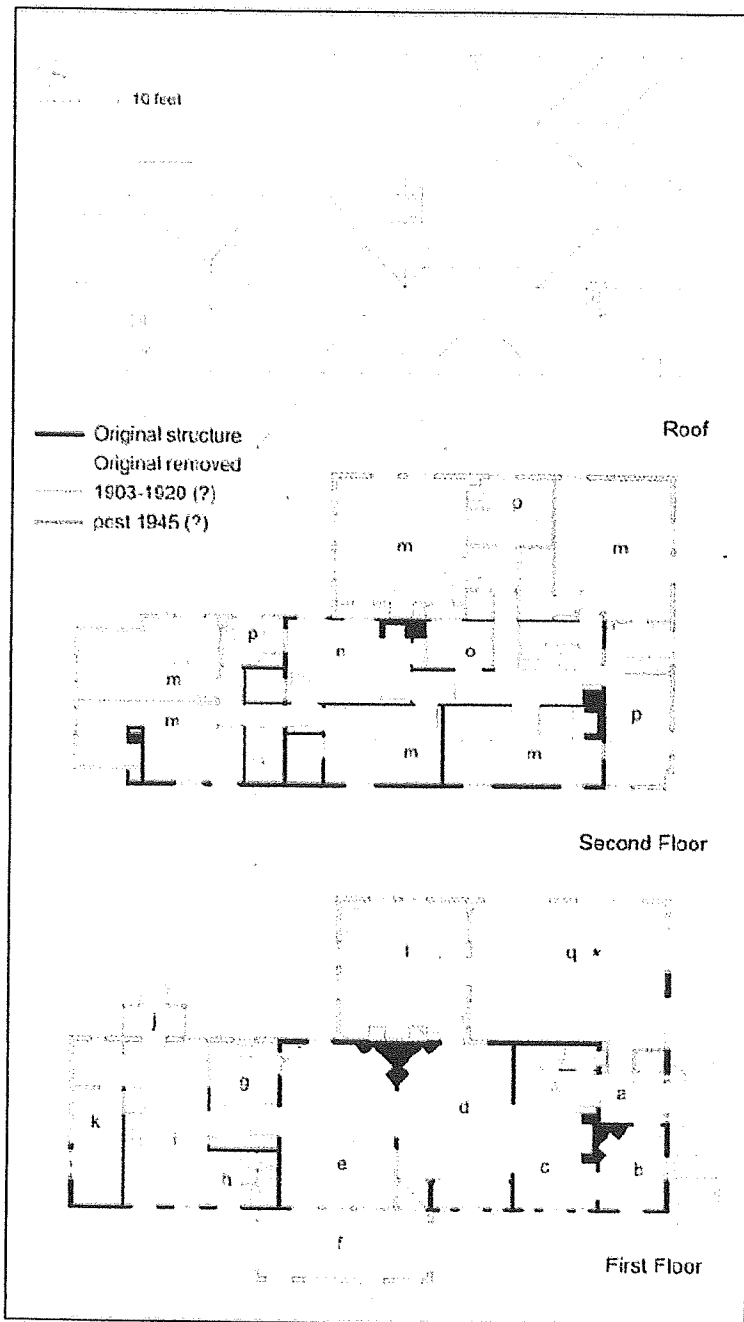
MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
 MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Continuation sheet 9

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Figure 4. Wright, p. 94, current plan. Legend: a. front door, b. study, c. hall, d. parlor, e. dining, f. and j. porch, g. pantry, h. back stair, i. kitchen, k. laundry, l. library, m. bedrooms, n. sitting room, o. linens, p. baths, q. family room. An at-grade two-bay garage is located under the family room (q).

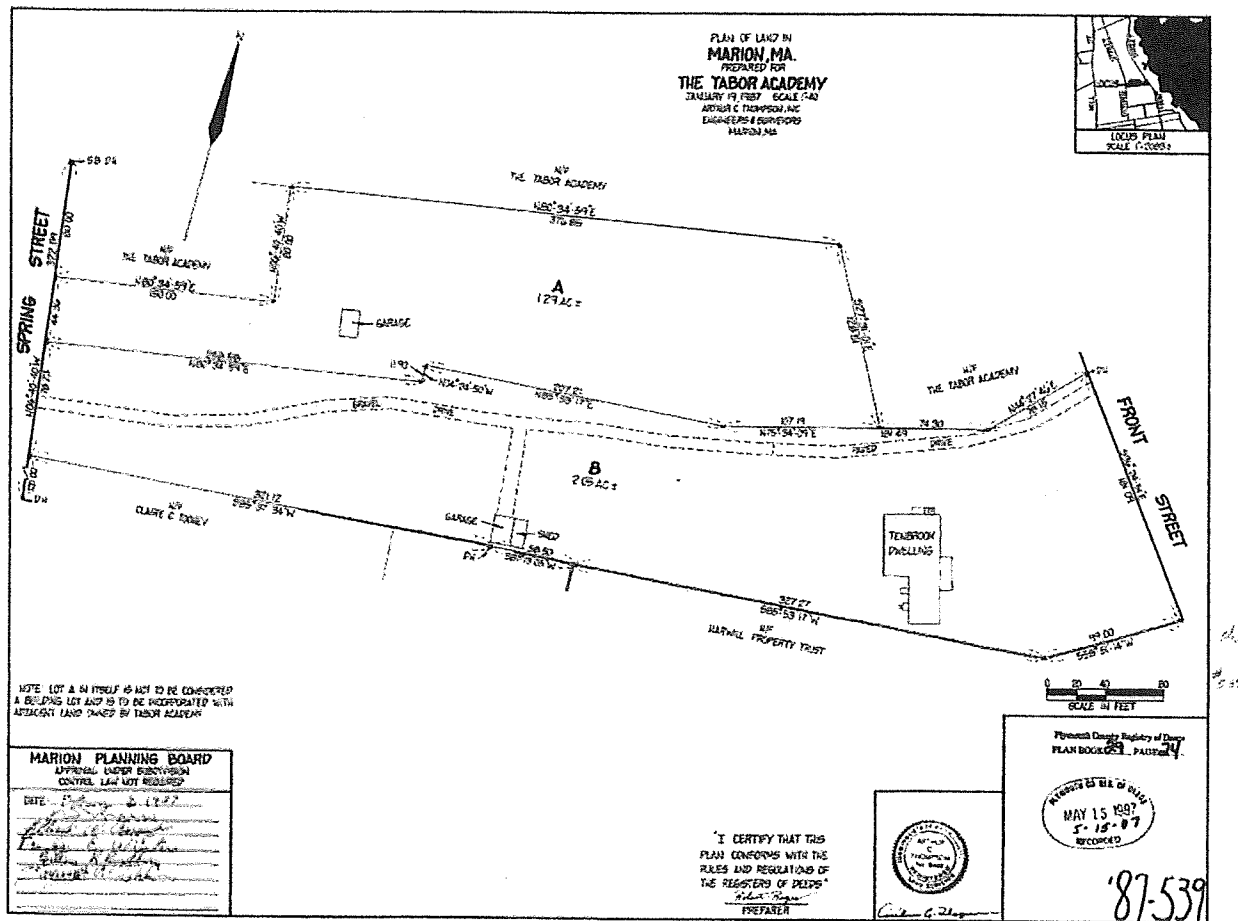


Figure 5. PCRD Plan No. 539 of 1987, 29-24, showing the original property bounds, the position of the house in relation to the frontage, and a more-recent outbuilding near the center of the image.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



View from E from public way.



Continuation sheet 11

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MARION

192 FRONT STREET

Area(s) Form No.

N
MRN.211

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

[If appropriate, cut and paste the text below into an inventory form's last continuation sheet.]

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible

Eligible **only** in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district

Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by John D. Clemson

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Rev. Percy Browne – Sidney Hosmer House, 1881-1882, 192 Front Street, was designed by architect Henry Hobson Richardson, considered by architectural historians and critics to have been the most accomplished, innovative and influential architect of the 19th century and arguably in the history of the U.S. The house is also associated with important local and regional figures, the Rev. William Percy Browne and electrical engineer and Edison Company executive Sidney Hosmer. As an outstanding, early and influential example of Shingle-style design it serves as an important physical document of the style's early evolution during the last quarter of the 19th century. Despite early alterations, which physical evidence and sensitivity suggests may have been undertaken by Richardson's successor firm Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, and have therefore attained historical significance in their own right, the house retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Areas of significance include architecture and social history. The site is therefore eligible for individual National Register listing under criteria A, B and C.